



Introducing Every Child Ready to Read Family Workshops

Every Child Ready to Read® Family Workshops is a six week program that involves young children and their parents in learning about the six early literacy skills that help prepare children to be successful at school. The Public Library Association and the Association for Library Service to Children incorporated the latest research into a series of parent and caregiver workshops to provide public libraries with vital tools to help prepare parents for their critical role as their child's first teacher. These tools were developed by Dr. Grover C. Whitehurst and Dr. Christopher Lonigan, well-known researchers in emergent literacy, and have been tested and refined by library demonstrations sites around the country. The National Research Council recommends that children enter school with early literacy skills that serve as the foundation for learning to read and write. Children who enter school with more of these skills are better able to benefit from the reading instruction they receive when they arrive at school. Idaho will be adapting this information into a workshop series for parents and caregivers and children.

Once a week, for six weeks, parents and their children will attend an Every Child Ready to Read Workshop. One of the six early literacy skills is highlighted each week and parents have a chance to practice the skill with their child during the 45-minute workshop. They will also get a book each week that goes with the skill to take home to keep and use with their child. Fun interactive activities, practical tips, and resources will also be shared during each session. During one of the sessions, parents will also get to hear from a public school representative on what the school expects from children entering school.

At the end of the six-week session, each family will have received six books, foam letters, a book bag and great information to help prepare their children for school.

What will libraries get for hosting the parent/child workshops? They will receive training, all the materials needed to run a successful workshop including free books and materials for their participants, publicity materials, scripts, and evaluation tools. They will also receive a free-standing display board with information about the six early literacy skills.

Parents will complete a survey at the end of the series to see if they have changed their behaviors as a result of participating in the program. This data will help us evaluate what these types of programs can do to help parents prepare their children for school. The idea is to offer a uniform statewide program that libraries can plug into and evaluate consistently.

Training: We have contracted with Saroj Ghoting to write scripts for each of these sessions. We will present a day-long training session with librarians on August 1, 2008 to practice presenting a workshop, go over the project requirements, and answer questions. Local sessions will be held in September, 2008 – May, 2009.